

Show Me Your Teeth by Child-OTKW

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Summary: In which Its bite does more to Stan than anyone could have predicted. (Based on: IT - Part One, 2017)

Show Me Your Teeth

I've done goofed guys. What the hell. This isn't even really stenbrough, but it's not *not*. There's some weird shit happening in this story.

I'm also not a diehard IT fan, like I've read the book - and what a 'fuck you' it is, lemme just say - but I watched the 2017 movie and these smol beans made me sad so I wrote this.

Warning: This story deals with possession, obsessive behaviour, mental instability, minor character death and some cannibalism. Read at your own discretion.

The wounds faded, becoming nothing more than a ring of perfect scars around his face.

As the days, then weeks, then months dragged on, Stan watched as the thin, pale marks began to blend in with his natural tone – until he struggled to pick them out in the mirror.

He could still feel them though. A brush of his fingertips, and with fluttering eyes he was chasing the memory of pain and nightmares.

Sometimes, he deliberately pressed down on the scars, just to see the way his reddened skin made the marks visible for a moment.

Sometimes, he traced them with his nails, digging into the numb skin hard enough to leave bruises, but never enough to draw blood.

Sometimes, Stan just laid on his bed, staring at the ceiling and wondering if he should have died in those disgusting sewers. He almost thought a bit of him had. It certainly felt like he was missing something, like It had sucked some vital part of him right out and eaten it whole.

Most days, he just felt cold.

O

The others were forgetting.

Stan knew it.

He could see it in their eyes as the year clawed its way to a close. The way they frowned, like they were confused, whenever he mentioned what they had seen down there.

He could hear it in the way they were never able to say, exactly, how he got his scars – how they avoided the topic, like their minds couldn't comprehend anything strange about the ring haloing his face.

There was an innocence to them once again, some type of glow around them that made them look happy and free. They acted like that summer was just a bad dream, and now that they were awake all of it ceased to matter, because the dark couldn't reach them now.

He didn't know how they could just forget. He didn't know how they could just move on.

It was all so fresh in his mind.

There were nights when he was thrown back into consciousness, a scream trapped in his throat and lights – those horrid, horrid lights – burning the back of his eyes.

There were nights when he simply laid there trembling, sure that every shadow had glowing orange eyes and that every whisper of wind was a voice crooning *Stanley Boy* so sweetly in his ear.

Stan watched as his friends fell back into the rhythm of their lives like well-oiled machines, chugging along without a problem.

Stan wished he could forget, too.

O

Bill didn't forget. And that –

That was important.

O

They'd catch each other's eye from over the table, or from across the room, or from right beside each other, and it felt like they were sharing a secret.

It was terrifying in a lot of ways.

Because if Bill remembered – Bill, who sometimes looked at him with bone-deep guilt as his big, bright eyes ran exactly over where It had bitten him, like he could see, like he couldn't *unsee* – then it had to be real.

And if it was all real, then Stan knew that his fear was justified.

It meant that the nightmares were real too. It meant that there were things – *a thing, just one, It* – lurking in the corners of his room. It meant that one day, It would be back –

And the scar on his palm would *throb*.

O

In other ways, it wasn't terrifying at all.

In fact, it felt like *relief* most of the time, because Stan knew that there was someone with him who understood. Someone who would knock their knees together, or brush up against him when they were walking, or just say a quiet *hey* – and he'd be pulled gently back from the precipice in his mind.

It felt nice. Because if Bill remembered, then Stan wasn't alone in the dark.

That –

Stan was *so so glad that he wasn't alone*.

O

Bill was strong.

Stan had always known it. So much so that it was a fact of life for him now.

The sun rose every morning, Beverly's hair was like fire, Richie was an asshole, and Bill Denbrough was the strongest person he knew.

He had seen it when Georgie disappeared – *floating, Stanley Boy, Georgie's floating now* – when Bill had stumbled, cracked, but *kept going*.

He had seen it out the front of the Well House, when Bill had faced them all, fully prepared to storm a monster's lair.

He had seen it in the sewers, when Bill had looked his fear right in the eye and shot It through the head.

Bill would let anyone use him as a crutch, even if he was unravelling at the seams. And Stan admired that so much because he could never be that strong.

He could barely hold *himself* together these days, let alone someone else.

And he didn't *want* to burden Bill. He didn't *want* to be so weak that he needed Bill as much as he did.

But Bill's support was unwavering, and he let Stan lean on him without complaint. He lent some of his warmth and strength and helped Stan find his feet when he couldn't even see the ground.

He was like a rock, steadfast and sure while Stan's whole world was spiralling out of control.

He tried not to be greedy. He tried to restrain himself. But it felt like he was cold to the core most days, his lungs aching from it, and his blood chipped with ice.

Bill was the only thing that made that go away, if only for a little while. A hand on his shoulder, a nudge of an arm, a loose hug – it didn't want what form it took and Stan was so desperate for it he couldn't bring himself to stop.

He clung to Bill in a way that was embarrassing.

Bill didn't seem to mind.

Stan didn't know if that made it better or not.

O

"Jesus, Stan!" Richie yelled, ripping himself away from where they'd accidentally touched. "You're like the freaking abominable snowman for fuck's sake! Why are you so cold?" He demanded, rubbing furiously at his hand.

Stan paused, looking down at his arm. His skin was a bit pale – paler than it used to be – but other than that, nothing had changed that he could see.

He shrugged, unable to form a reply that wouldn't end in them giving him odd looks.

They had been doing that more and more lately.

Staring.

At him.

Like he was some sort of interesting bug. Stan didn't know why. He didn't know what they were searching for when they sent him those quizzical little glances – and that annoyed him.

So what if he didn't always think before he spoke? So what if his jokes didn't always make sense, or if they fell flat because no one else seemed to *get it*? So what if he snapped more often now, tone sharp and words sharper.

It wasn't his fault that they had all moved on, while he was still stuck in those damp tunnels running beneath Derry.

It wasn't his fault that paintings still made his stomach churn, or that sometimes in class his hands shook so badly that he couldn't grip his pencil.

It wasn't his fault that he *remembered* Its teeth sinking into his flesh, or Its cold – *so very cold* – tongue laving over his face, or the glimpses of bright lights that danced at the back of Its throat, teasing him but never showing themselves.

It wasn't his fault.

But at the same time, he didn't like the way they looked at him. The weight of their eyes felt like maggots crawling under his skin and he never could resist the urge to scratch the sensation away.

It was better to be quiet when that happened, he'd learned. If he didn't speak, they had no reason to look at him – and that was *good*.

Richie scoffed, his focus already drifting away to the others. He was like a firefly, or a hummingbird, Stan mused. Flitting about, never stopping. Stan wondered if Richie's heart could beat as fast as a hummingbird's – *1260 beats per minute* – and what it would take to see it do that.

Excitement. People's hearts beat faster when they were excited. Stan tilted his head, staring at his little hummingbird friend.

His mind *whirled like a carousel*.

Exercise. That made a heart go fast too. Stan imagined Richie running, then, when that wasn't good enough he imagined Richie running desperately, chased by something big and dangerous, his face twisted in –

Fear.

Fear worked as well.

"Y-you okay?"

And like a wave breaking against a cliff side, Bill effortlessly brought him back.

Stan turned to look at his friend, lips automatically curving into a smile.

Bill wasn't staring at him, not really, but Stan felt the other's attention like it was fire lapping at his skin.

It was nothing like when the rest of the group did it. Stan didn't mind when Bill was the one watching him. The tension in his shoulders vanished the second his friend's eyes landed on him.

"I'm fine." Stan replied, the words mechanical by this point. His answer was always the same.

Bill always asked him anyway.

Bill hummed, eyes catching Stan's before they moved away. "Okay." He accepted. He didn't believe Stan, but he didn't push either, because he knew Stan better than he knew himself.

Stan was grateful, even though he didn't think he'd ever take the unspoken offer.

Bill...Bill didn't need to know how fucked up Stan was now. He didn't need to know how Stan wasn't *right* anymore – how his skin didn't fit some days, like he was bigger and smaller than his body could contain.

Bill had enough to deal with, without Stan dragging him down more than he already was. Stan's problems would drown Bill.

That didn't mean he didn't want to though.

Bill always did look his best when he was fighting for his life.

O

It was a quiet night.

The others had already left for their own homes, and only Stan and Bill remained out on the back porch of the Denbrough's house.

The air was crisp and cold, but Stan was always freezing these days, so he made do with just jeans and a simple shirt. It was Bill that was shaking – hardly noticeable, nothing more than faint tremors at the moment – and Stan carefully didn't move when Bill shuffled closer,

until their sides were pressed together.

A new kind of tension wound through Stan, one that he had trouble naming.

Bill let out a sigh, tucking his hands close to his chest.

"What?" Stan asked, cocking his head so that he could see Bill's face properly. There was only the shitty little light above them, and it barely illuminated the area.

Stan could see just fine.

"It's just." Bill sighed again, longer and infinitely sadder. "It's been almost three years since..."

Stan blinked, remembered the date, then blinked again. "Oh." He whispered, terrible understanding rushing through him. "Georgie."

Bill huffed bitterly. "Yeah," he murmured, "Georgie."

Stan closed his eyes and clenched his jaw, angry at their carelessness. They – *he* – should have known that Bill wouldn't want to hang out, especially this weekend.

"I'm sorry, Bill. We –"

"F-forgot. I know." There was too much acceptance in his voice, and Stan *hated* that he'd help put it there.

"No." He told him firmly. "No. Not me, Bill. I...I haven't forgotten. Anything."

They'd never spoken about it before. Had never needed to. They were both content to let their friends stay ignorant of the horrors they'd endured, even though it meant that they had to shoulder the memories by themselves. But Stan needed to Bill to *know*, with a ferocity that left him breathless. He needed Bill to know that he wasn't alone.

"I remember Georgie, and I remember the sewers, and I remember *It*, okay? I remember *It*, and its *teeth* and –" He swallowed thickly, trying

to force the words out, but they wouldn't come. He wondered if this was how Bill always felt, battling against himself just to speak.

Arms wrapped around him, pulling him into a solid chest that was so warm it *hurt*.

There was a voice in his ear, familiar and smooth and comforting in a way few things were anymore. "*Breathe, Stan, breathe. With me. Come on. In, and out. In, and out. Good. Breathe with me, Stan.*"

A hand rested against his sternum, branding him with how hot it was, and Stan slowly started to follow the instructions. He moved his chest in time with the one behind him. All the while, Bill's voice remained steady, never faltering as he brought him back again.

They stayed like that, plastered against each other, until Stan's breathing returned to normal. Even then, Stan didn't pull away. His back was burning with the heat of Bill's body and it was the best thing he had ever felt. He could feel his own body greedily soaking in that warmth, lapping it up and storing it deep inside himself.

He never wanted it to end.

O

Sometimes, Stan dreamed of running through the sewers. Down in the twisting tunnels with the shadows draped over him like a cloak.

He never remembered the dreams clearly, but he knew he wasn't running away from anything. No. He'd be running *after* something.

O

Sometimes, Stan woke up soaked. His skin slick with foul-smelling water, his pyjamas clinging to his thin body, and his feet scratched and bloody.

He was always starving when he woke up like that.

O

His headaches were getting worse, and Stan honestly thought

something was scraping through his brain. It was like slime, oozing its way into his mind and clogging him up until he couldn't think right. It was always more intense when he was around his friends.

Stan started avoiding them as much as he could, eager to escape the heaviness and flashes of *ragehungerhatred* that hit him whenever he saw them.

He was so tired lately. He felt like he could sleep for *years*.

O

His parents were worried about him. His father, with the furrow between his brows that became more pronounced each day. His mother, with her constant questions and soft, concerned touches.

Stan, resolutely, *didn't care*.

He was more bothered by the constant ache of hunger that was nestled in his gut.

No matter what he ate, no matter how often he forced food down his throat, that ache never disappeared.

It grew so bad that some days he couldn't even drag himself out of bed, let alone go to school. The harsh pangs in his stomach ebbed and grew in equal viciousness, leaving him out of sorts and exhausted for days on end.

His mother dithered uncertainly by his side, coming in and out of his bedroom, trying to find something that he could eat that wouldn't make him gag.

But there was nothing. Everything tasted *wrong*, and Stan didn't know why.

O

One afternoon, he opened his eyes blearily to see Bill perched beside him.

His friend was sketching, his pencil moving confidently against the

page as he brought what it was in his mind to life.

Stan had always liked watching Bill draw. It was like getting a peek beneath the curtain. A glimpse of that wonderful spark of creativity that Bill kept safe from the cruel world.

"You better not be drawing me." He croaked out, face half-buried in his pillow.

Bill's eyes darted to him, a little surprised, mostly just kind. There was a smile curling at the edges of his mouth. "I'm n-not." He said quietly. "I know it m-makes you u-uncomfortable."

Stan pushed himself up, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

It didn't make him uncomfortable. It was that he thought there were so many more interesting things that Bill could focus his talent on. Stan was boring. Plain.

Bill should draw things that inspired him.

"Why are you here?" He asked instead, then frowned because he hadn't meant for that to sound as sharp as it did.

Bill didn't so much as blink at his rude tone. He wondered if Bill was so used to his moods now that it didn't even bother him anymore, then grimaced.

He didn't mean to take his problems out on his friends. It was stupid, considering that most of them didn't even remember *why* Stan was like this. But he couldn't help himself sometimes. Being around them just mad him so *angry*, and he knew that if he didn't occasionally snap at them, he'd explode.

Stan didn't want to know what would happen if it got to that point.

Something in him always vibrated with *anticipation* at the thought.

"You missed another d-day of school," Bill informed him succinctly, his stutter almost gone these days. His speech therapy was clearly working wonders. "I brought your homework."

He bent over, tugging his bag up onto his lap and ruffling through it. Stan wrapped his arms around his legs, perching his chin on his knees as he waited.

Bill pulled free a handful of paper and held it out. Stan took the stack but didn't give it more than a glance as he dropped the sheets of paper beside him, shifting so that he was facing Bill fully.

"You okay?" Bill asked, like clockwork. Only thing time, from the glint in his eyes, Stan knew that he wouldn't back down without the truth.

He sighed quietly, looking away from that probing gaze and biting his lip lightly. "I don't know." He confessed. "I can't eat anything without trying to throw it up, and my stomach's killing me."

He didn't mention the dreams. Didn't want to see how Bill would react to *that*.

"You've been acting f-funny for a while, Stan." Bill said, tapping his pencil nervously against the paper. "Are...are you sick? Have you been to the doctor?"

"Yeah." Stan shrugged loosely. "They say it's just a cold. They think I'll be fine in a few days."

Bill tilted his head, pursing his lips. "W-what do you think?"

Stan looked down at his palm, opening and closing his hand and watching how the faint scar there pulled. "I don't know, Bill. I've been sick before and this – this isn't that. I feel...weird."

Amusement flared in his mind, and a voice, so terribly familiar, whispered inside him.

Broken. I reached in and scooped you empty, didn't I, Stanley Boy?

Stan screwed his eyes shut, shoving the faint words away, disturbed as he always was when it happened. He knew it wasn't real. They'd beaten It, had sent It scuttling back into the depths of the sewers. He was just –

It wasn't real.

"I'm tired all the time, and I feel so – so *damn cold*, like I'll never get warm again."

We like the cold though, don't we? It's always nice and cold down here.

"You'll be okay, Stan." Bill shuffled around, swinging his legs up onto the bed properly and pulled Stan into a fierce hug. "Y-you just need some re-rest."

Stan burrowed deeper into Bill shoulder, trying to hide from the laughter ringing through him. The sound bubbled at the back of his throat like a horrible echo.

His fingers came up and curled into Bill's shirt, hoping for just a little of the other's warmth to seep into him. "I can't sleep, Bill. Every time I close my eyes I'm back there, under Neibolt, and I *can't*."

The hand gripping the back of his head tightened its hold.

"I'll stay with you."

Stan froze. "What?"

"I'll stay with you, we c-can keep each other s-safe."

He leaned back just enough to see the determined set of Bill's face. His mind was suspiciously quiet.

Bill. Here. With him, for an entire night.

They'd had sleepovers before; heaps over the years with the other Losers. But never had it been just the two of them.

Stan used to think they were getting too old for sleepovers, but now, the idea of having Bill close – even just for one night – and willing to watch over him let him breathe easy. Bill wouldn't let anything hurt him, not again. Bill would protect him this time.

"Okay." Stan whispered.

O

It was a simple thing to convince his parents.

All they had to see was Stan up and walking around, smiling for the first time in weeks in Bill's presence, and they caved like wet paper.

Stan sighed in relief, and made sure to squeeze Bill's hand tight in thanks, under the table and out of sight.

O

That night, Bill slipped into Stan's bed after his mother had checked on them for the last time.

Stan kept his eyes clamped shut, counting the seconds in his head as Bill settled into place, just a hair's breadth from him.

The heat was fantastic. It scorched him, burning into his limp body, leaving no part of him untouched.

Stan heard Bill's soft breath even out, and slowly turned his head to face his friend. He watched raptly as Bill's chest moved up and down, lifting the blanket with each inhale.

His gaze travelled up to Bill's face, taking in how peaceful he looked asleep, before it dropped swiftly to his neck.

Stan's stomach rolled as the hunger pitched sharply.

His eyes fixed on the light flutter of Bill's throat, able to see with crystal clear clarity how the blood rushed just under the surface. Steady, measured beats.

If he listened hard enough, he could hear the pulse reverberating in his head.

His finger stroked the soft skin, leeching the heat right from the source, marvelling. Bill was always so *warm*.

The thought crackled through him like lightning, and Stan yanked his hand away, stuffing both under his pillow as he gasped soundlessly.

He sunk his teeth into his lip until he could taste blood.

He dug his fingers into the mattress, trying to push back against the sudden want that had rocked through him when he'd touched Bill's throat.

There was something wrong with him, he realised with sudden horror. Something more than just bad dreams and mood swings and hunger.

He shouldn't look at his friend – his *best friend*, the only one who *understood him* – and think about how absolutely, beautifully hot his blood would be.

He shouldn't think about how *good* it felt to have Bill pressed up against him like this – helpless and utterly at his mercy – when he was only here to help Stan.

It was sick. He was sick.

Billy was always my favourite too. So sweet, he tastes. The best.

Stan buried his face in his pillow, his chest hollowing as that looped through his head. His mouth filled with saliva and he forced himself to swallow.

He spent hours laying there, trying to control the urge he had to just reach out and *rip*.

When he did eventually fall asleep, it was to the cadence of Bill's heartbeat.

O

Things, strangely enough, got easier after that night.

Like the realisation that he was all twisted up and broken and *different* now was a hurdle he hadn't known he had to jump.

He could eat, though only a little, and only when his mother stared at him over the table, the anxious twisting of her hands easing at each mouthful he had.

The dreams had quietened down too, and Stan didn't wake up drenched anymore. The bags under his eyes had all but vanished and his hands no longer shook.

He could spend time with the rest of his friends now without the bursts of irritation and dangerous whispers, and they welcomed him back like they hadn't even realised he'd been avoiding them.

He was still cold to touch, but even that became normal over time. No one flinched away from him anymore, and as another summer rolled through Derry, the other Losers liked to huddle against him. Richie jokingly said it was because he was so cold-hearted.

Stan would imagine Richie running, and just smile back.

He felt, absurdly, normal.

Well, so long as he could hear it.

Those steady beats that played like a record in the back of his mind.

Bill's heartbeat.

It was like a tether that kept him suspended above a pit. His last lifeline.

Stan tried not to think about how he could hear the sound from across town. How all he had to do was close his eyes and he could *pinpoint* Bill's location in his mind, even in a crowded room. How he could sometimes tell what Bill was feeling, just from listening to the *whoosh* of blood and the *thump* of his heart's chambers.

It wasn't natural that he could do it, and he knew it.

So Stan ignored the *hows* and *whys* and focussed on the way it calmed the thing rumbling under his skin.

He focussed on matching his breathing to the sound, on letting the comforting beats wrap his head in cotton and blot out the dark thoughts that still swirled in his mind.

There were moments, in the beginning, when he got distracted and

the sound would disappear for a split second. And it always felt like the tether jerked, yanking at him, turning into a damned *noose*, before he concentrated and it rushed back into his senses.

Bill looked at him sometimes like he knew something was wrong, but Stan always ducked away from the questions in his eyes.

It felt like a sin, that he relied so heavily on the sound. He didn't want to tell Bill what he was doing.

It wasn't that he thought Bill would be mad at him. Bill was too kind for that, and it wasn't like it was anything big. Stan just tuned in to keep himself in check. To remind himself to act normal.

He wasn't hurting anyone either. If anything, listening *stopped* him from hurting someone accidentally. He knew Bill would agree if he ever found out.

Stan knew that Bill wouldn't hate him for it. But there was a horrible little part of his mind – one that always sounded like *It* – that said otherwise.

Stan didn't want Bill to feel uncomfortable at the violation of his privacy, and he didn't want to take the chance that Bill would push him away.

It was...safer for everyone this way. Stan got to pretend that he was okay, and everyone around him got to think he was, too.

O

The first time Stan heard Bill's heartbeat rocket up with adrenaline, it was like a gunshot going off in his ear.

He flinched violently, head snapping around from where he'd been talking to Mike, hunting down Bill's location frantically.

Mike was calling for him, but Stan couldn't hear anything over that pounding in his head.

He ran, following the fast *thumpthumpthump* like a bloodhound.

Stan didn't remember how long it took him. He didn't remember how quickly he outpaced Mike. He didn't remember anything until he burst through the bushes near the river and saw Bill facing down Victor Criss.

Stan's eyes took in *everything*.

The punch. Bill tumbling to the rocky ground. Victor standing over him, snarling like a wild animal. A thin strip of blood leaking out of the corner of Bill's mouth, shockingly red as it cut over his pale skin.

And just like that, he was lost.

O

Awareness trickled back to him gradually.

He was hunched over something, chest heaving as the buzzing in his head finally died down to a satisfied hum.

Stan blinked slowly, staring at his trembling arms with numb fascination. He was drenched up to his elbows. Thick, bright red oozed over his skin, dripping down his arms there was so much of it.

The smell registered next. Metallic and strong, assaulting his nose and drowning his senses. His eyes fluttered closed in rapture.

The hunger that always simmered low in his gut was gone, and for the first time in *years* Stan felt full. The tang lingered on his tongue as he gulped down each breath, savouring how unbelievably *sweet* it was.

He pushed himself upright, eyes pinned to the carnage below him.

It was unrecognisable, just a mess of blood and flesh and bone. It was, undeniably, an *improvement*.

Stan raised his arm curiously, bringing his hand close to his face. He licked over his palm, tongue tracing the scar there. His eyes nearly rolled into the back of his head it was that delicious.

He felt giddy from relief.

He pressed his hand against his mouth, smearing the mess he had made of himself even more, and smothering the urge to crow in delight.

There was something on the fringe of his hearing, and the moment his attention flittered to it, it roared to life.

A heartbeat.

Stan's eyes shot to the side, landing on the figure sitting just a few metres from him.

"Bill."

Bill flinched, eyes too wide and face too white. Stan frowned, head twisting in concern.

"What's wrong? Are you okay?" Stan fluidly stood up, making his way to his friend. He stopped though, when Bill scrambled backwards.

"Bill?"

"S-s-s-stay a-away."

Stan couldn't help the flicker of hurt that erupted in his chest.

"It's okay, Bill." He said, hands hovering in between them. "You're okay. I'm not going to hurt you." He took a few more careful steps before lowering himself with painful precision.

Stan stared at Bill and felt like the whole world was holding its breath with him.

Bill shook violently, his body convulsing as his eyes darted behind him to the butchered remains. Stan clicked his tongue lightly, fondness winding through him at the horror wafting off the other.

"It's okay." He told him again, reaching out and brushing Bill's tear-stained cheek tenderly. The tacky blood marred his skin like a brand and Stan watched his thumb trace over the small divot beside Bill's mouth, before it drew up to press just under one of those big, shining eyes.

"You're okay." He whispered, his other hand coming up and wrapping around the back of Bill's neck. The harsh beat of that heart turned rabbit-quick as he tugged the other to him.

Bill resisted, his hand coming up and shoving wildly at Stan's stained chest. "L-l-le't go!" He thrashed, clawing and struggling like a wet kitten. Stan grabbed Bill's arms swiftly, holding them out of the way as he forcibly pulled Bill against him.

Bill choked out a sob as he held him close. His hitched cries made Stan hum comfortingly as he rocked him back and forth.

He buried his nose at Bill's throat, breathing in the heavy scent of fear. "It was right." Stan told him quietly, lips brushing against the hammering pulse point.

Bill went rigid.

"You are the best."

Also, the timeline might be a bit obscure, but Bill and Stan are around 15-16 at the end. Not that that makes it any better... Let me know what you think~